

Tox-A-Way Wednesdays

Sponsor/Contact

Columbus-Bartholomew County Solid Waste Management Authority 720 S. Mapleton Street Columbus. IN 47201-7353 812-376-2614/ Fax 812-376-2616

Summary

Weekly drop-off service, by appointment, for prescribed kinds of HHW, staffed by a regular employee of the agency.

Start date/hours

Began in May 1994. Open 8 a-m. to Noon, Wednesdays.

Cost

Estimated total first-year cost of service. \$10,000. Based on processing a projected 25 drums of material during first 12 months, cost per pound \$400.

Program Description

"Tox-A-Way Wednesdays" is a new, initially small-scale HHW program for residents of the City of Columbus and Bartholomew County. By requiring appointments and prescribing the kinds of HHW that will be accepted, the sponsor has gained control of the volume of HHW delivered for processing - a sensible, conservative approach during the early months of service when costs and staffing requirements are not entirely known. and when unexpectedly large volumes of material could create management problems.

The first objective of this HHW program is to facilitate the reuse of materials rather than collection. Thus, when a householder calls for an appointment to bring in HHW and says, for example, that he has oil paint in usable condition, or herbicides and pesticides not banned from use and in original containers, the caller is advised to try to dispose of the items with people who will use them – neighbors, local businesses, schools, churches, nonprofit organizations, etc. This advice works: some reuse options are immediately apparent to the caller, and other callers who have made appointments to bring in materials have called back later to cancel, explaining that they've found a user.

The preliminary telephone call determines what kind of HHW and how much. Both kinds of information are essential because the program only accepts certain HHW and only in limited quantities. Here is the menu:

1. Motor oil and oil filters: 5 gallon limit; no gasoline filters but hydraulic filters are O.K.
2. Antifreeze: 5 gallon limit.
3. Oil based paints, thinners (mineral spirits, paint thinner. etc.) and finishes (stains, polyurethane, varnish, etc.), limited to 5 gallons total.
No chlorinated solvents accepted.
4. Household batteries: all types, including automotive; 10-pound limit on household batteries, and no more than 5 automobile batteries.
5. Gasoline, diesel fuel, and kerosene: 10-gallon limit.
6. Weed and brush killer (liquids) and fertilizer; but no pesticides or other specialty chemicals.

The program does not accept latex paints, explaining: "Due to their low toxicity and high cost of disposal we

will not accept these items. We suggest using the paint up or drying it out for landfill disposal."

The collection point for all materials is a prefabricated steel building measuring 12 x 12 feet and outfitted especially for safe handling and storage of HHW (cost \$16,000). Materials are identified, sorted, and bulked here. Full barrels of bulked materials (fuel blends, for example) are stored inside on pallets.

The staff person who unloads HHW from patrons' cars and sorts and bulks materials has retired from career in local industry and gone to work for the agency as a fulltime post-retirement career. This same person also serves as foreman of the drop-off recycling program and materials processing center.

Used motor oil is filtered, stored in bulk tanks and burned in the space heater used to warm the recycling collection and processing center. *(Note there are federal regulations governing this activity in 40 CFR § 279.23. "On-site burning in space heaters." Only used oil generated by the operator or received from household do-it-yourself generators may be burned: heater capacity must not exceed 0.5 million Btu per hour and the combustion gases must be vented to the ambient air.)*

The decision to establish a permanent collection program rather than, for example, holding periodic toxaway days was part economic and part convenience for users. The agency believed it would have to spend between \$25,000 and \$35,000 for one, one-day collection. This compares to projected annual cost of \$20,000 for the weekly collection program. Making collection convenient is crucial to *success*, with success defined as intercepting HHW before it hits the garbage can. As knowledge spreads about the weekly HHW collection service, the agency hopes to capture quantities of HHW that householders simply would discard in trash rather than set aside for an annual collection.

Operating costs have proven to be less than initially forecast. The first-year budget called for 50 drums of material at \$400 each. But actual charges have been significantly less in some cases. For example:

Heritage Environmental has taken drum-loads of non-recyclable household batteries (for disposal in a hazardous waste landfill) at \$300 per drum plus transportation.

Parker Enterprises of Lebanon, Ohio, has charged \$99 per barrel to haul uncompacted oil filters, minimum two barrels.

Laidlaw Environmental has hauled drums of fuel blending liquid at \$150 per drum.

The agency has gone through a broker – Kemark of Fort Wayne — to arrange for fuels blending disposal, after receiving proposals from several firms.